

Application No. 09/412,082
Amendment dated July 27, 2006
Reply to Office Action of June 12, 2006

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-17 (cancelled).

18. (previously presented) A method for inserting a spinal implant across a disc space between adjacent vertebral bodies of a human spine, said method comprising the steps of:
 - distracting said adjacent vertebral bodies to the adjacent vertebral bodies;
 - forming a bore from the anterior or posterior aspect of the spinal column across the distracted disc space between said adjacent vertebral bodies and into the adjacent vertebral bodies, said bore having opposed arcuate portions in an angular relationship to one another along at least a portion of each of the adjacent vertebral bodies; and
 - inserting into said bore said spinal implant having opposed arcuate portions in an angular relationship to one another along the length of said implant and oriented toward the adjacent vertebral bodies.
19. (previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein said inserting step includes the sub-step of inserting said implant having a generally frusto-conical configuration.
20. (previously presented) The method of claim 19, wherein said inserting step includes the sub-step of inserting said implant having a generally round cross section transverse to the longitudinal axis of said implant.
21. (previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein said inserting step includes the sub-step of inserting said implant having a generally oval cross section transverse to the longitudinal axis of said implant.
22. (previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein said inserting step includes the sub-step of inserting said implant having at least one truncated side.

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23. (previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein the distracting step includes the sub-step of inducing angulation to the adjacent vertebral bodies.
24. (previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein the distracting step includes the step of inserting a spinal distractor into the disc space between the adjacent vertebral bodies.
25. (previously presented) The method of claim 24, further comprising the step of positioning a sleeve over said spinal distractor and into contact with the adjacent vertebral bodies.
26. (currently amended) The method of claim 18, wherein the distracting step includes the step of positioning a sleeve having an extension so that the extension is inserted~~for insertion~~ into the disc space and bears~~for bearing~~ against end plates of the adjacent vertebral bodies.
27. (previously presented) The method of claim 26, wherein the step of inserting includes the sub-step of inserting said implant through said sleeve and into the bore.
28. (previously presented) The method of claim 26, wherein the positioning step includes the sub-step of inducing angulation to the adjacent vertebral bodies.
29. (previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein the forming step includes the sub-step selected from one of milling and drilling the bore.
30. (previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein the forming step further comprises the sub-step of placing a drill having a diameter greater than the disc space through said sleeve prior to the sub-step of drilling.
31. (previously presented) The method of claim 18, further comprising the step of loading said implant with a material selected from one of a fusion promoting substance, a bone growth promoting material, bone morphogenetic protein, and bone prior to the step of inserting.
32. (previously presented) The method of claim 18, further comprising the step of coating said implant with a material selected from one of bone morphogenic

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protein, a fusion promoting substance, and a bone growth promoting material prior to the step of inserting.

33. (previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein the step of inserting includes inserting an implant containing a material selected from one of a fusion promoting substance, a bone growth promoting material, bone morphogenetic protein, and bone.
34. (previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein the step of inserting includes inserting an implant comprising a material selected from one of a bone growth promoting material, bone morphogenetic protein, and bone.
35. (previously presented) The method of claim 18, wherein the step of inserting includes inserting an implant in combination with a material selected from one of a bone growth promoting material, bone morphogenetic protein, and bone.
36. (currently amended) The method of ~~claim 25~~claim 18, further comprising the step of placing an inner sleeve within said sleeve prior to the step of forming the bore.
37. (previously presented) The method of claim 36, further comprising the step of removing said inner sleeve prior to the step of inserting said implant.
38. (previously presented) A method for preparing a spinal disc space between a pair of vertebral endplates for insertion of an implant therebetween, comprising:
 - inserting a guide sleeve to the disc space from an anterior approach, the guide sleeve having a working channel providing access to a first disc space location and a second disc space location;
 - distracting the disc space to a desired disc space height;
 - preparing the first disc space location through the working channel for insertion of a first implant therein;
 - inserting a reamer plug through the working channel into the first disc space location;
 - preparing the second disc space location through the working channel for insertion of a second implant therein after inserting the reamer plug;

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inserting the second implant through the working channel into the second disc space location, the second implant being tapered to establish a desired lordotic angle between the vertebral endplates;

removing the plug from the first disc space location after inserting the second implant; and

inserting the first implant through the working channel into the first disc space location, the first implant being tapered to establish a desired lordotic angle between the vertebral endplates.